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Hudud and Karpal's faux pas

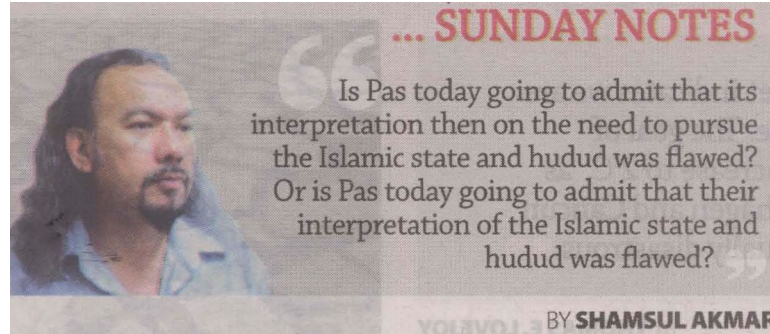
IT seems Democratic Action Party chairman Karpal Singh's favourite word when chastising Malay leaders who cross him is asking them to *taubat* or to repent.

Insisting that others *taubat* in the context of the Malay language places the person on a high moral ground. The person on the receiving end is nothing less than a sinner.

If such a demand had come from a respected Muslim it would have been an attempt to salvage a lost soul but from anyone lesser, it would be a tad arrogant if not outright uncouth.

Given that Karpal is not a Muslim and would only allow an Islamic state over his dead body, his demand for the *taubat* of Malay leaders should be nothing more than a choice of word by a politician seeking maximum impact in the public sphere.

Ironically, his latest demand for *taubat* from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is over the issue of Pas' renegeing on its struggle to form an Islamic state. Dr Mahathir had commented on the recent Pas elections that the biggest winner in the party polls was Karpal because Pas had decided to drop its pursuit for the formation of the Islamic state that would ensure the implementation of the *hudud* (Islamic penal code that includes am-



putation of limbs and stoning to death). The statesman had written that Karpal did not have to die for Pas to walk over his body to realise their Islamic state since Pas has decided to drop it.

Obviously Dr Mahathir's posting had chagrined Karpal who did not only demand that the former repent but also spewed vitriol that Dr Mahathir is in the twilight of his years and over the hill.

While the same could also be said of Karpal, this is not the first time he had asked a Malay leader to *taubat*.

In 2009, Karpal had asked for opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to *taubat* for creating trouble and to stop betraying the people

and their trust. He went further to state that the opposition pact needed another leader, a good leader and Anwar had to go.

Whether Anwar has *taubat* or not, with the knowledge of Karpal or otherwise, it is not on public record.

But Anwar is still the opposition leader and Karpal is still his lawyer. As such, Karpal's demand for Malay leaders to *taubat* is probably something that should not be taken too seriously, as in his case with Anwar; it is merely an outburst, out of frustration or maybe a cry for attention. But in the case of his outburst against Dr Mahathir, it should be taken that the former prime minister has touched a raw nerve.

His postings had drawn not only strong reactions from Karpal but also from the staunchest advocate of Islamic state and *hudud* previously, Pas' *Mursyidul Am* (spiritual adviser) Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

Nik Aziz went on to state that Dr Mahathir was the one who opposed Pas' implementation of the *hudud* and wrote a letter to the Kelantan state government against it.

Sarcastically, Nik Aziz said, Dr Mahathir and not Karpal signed the letter. The Kelantan menteri besar gave a new twist to the whole issue; accusing Dr Mahathir as being anti-Islam.

Dr Mahathir's reply to it was consistent: "What I oppose is Pas' *hudud*."

Given the recent development where Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang declared that the Islamic state is not specifically stated in the Quran and that *hudud* is not a priority, such inconsistencies underscored what Dr Mahathir had been saying. If Pas today says that the Islamic state is not a requirement and *hudud* is not a priority, then why were they so bent in demanding that the government accede to their implementation then?

If then it was tantamount to be

kufur or unIslamic to not pursue or support the *hudud* and Islamic state, does dropping the struggle for them today not tantamount to the same?

Is Pas today going to admit that its interpretation then on the need to pursue the Islamic state and *hudud* was flawed? Or is Pas today going to admit that their interpretation of the Islamic state and *hudud* was flawed?

Whether Pas admits it or not, or comes up with some new religious-sounding justification to their renegeing from their earlier pursuits, Pas can be questioned on whether their earlier pursuits are Islamic requirements or otherwise.

If Pas says today that it is not stated in the Quran, then it means that what they had insisted on earlier was a Pas thing.

All this brings to the conclusion that the religious edicts on the need to pursue the Islamic state and *hudud* by Pas in the past were wrong and misleading.

So which is which? Maybe Karpal can help the Pas leaders. After all, Karpal seems to be an expert on *taubat* for Malay leaders. But there's no need for it. After all, Karpal and the Pas leaders are now of one mind.